

Reducing Perinatal HIV Transmission: *Utilizing Peer Counselors in Prenatal Clinics*

Perinatal Grantees Meeting
2005 CDC Prevention Conference
Atlanta, Georgia
June 14, 2005

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CIRCLE OF CARE



♥ Designated Ryan White Title IV Grantee for the Philadelphia area

♥ Founded 1989 to provide integrated and consumer-centered services responsive to the priorities of individuals and families infected and affected by HIV

♥ Project of the Family Planning Council



Our Mission

CIRCLE OF CARE

The Circle of Care is committed to the provision of quality comprehensive family-centered continuum of care and services for HIV affected women, children, adolescents, and their families and to the prevention of HIV disease in these populations.



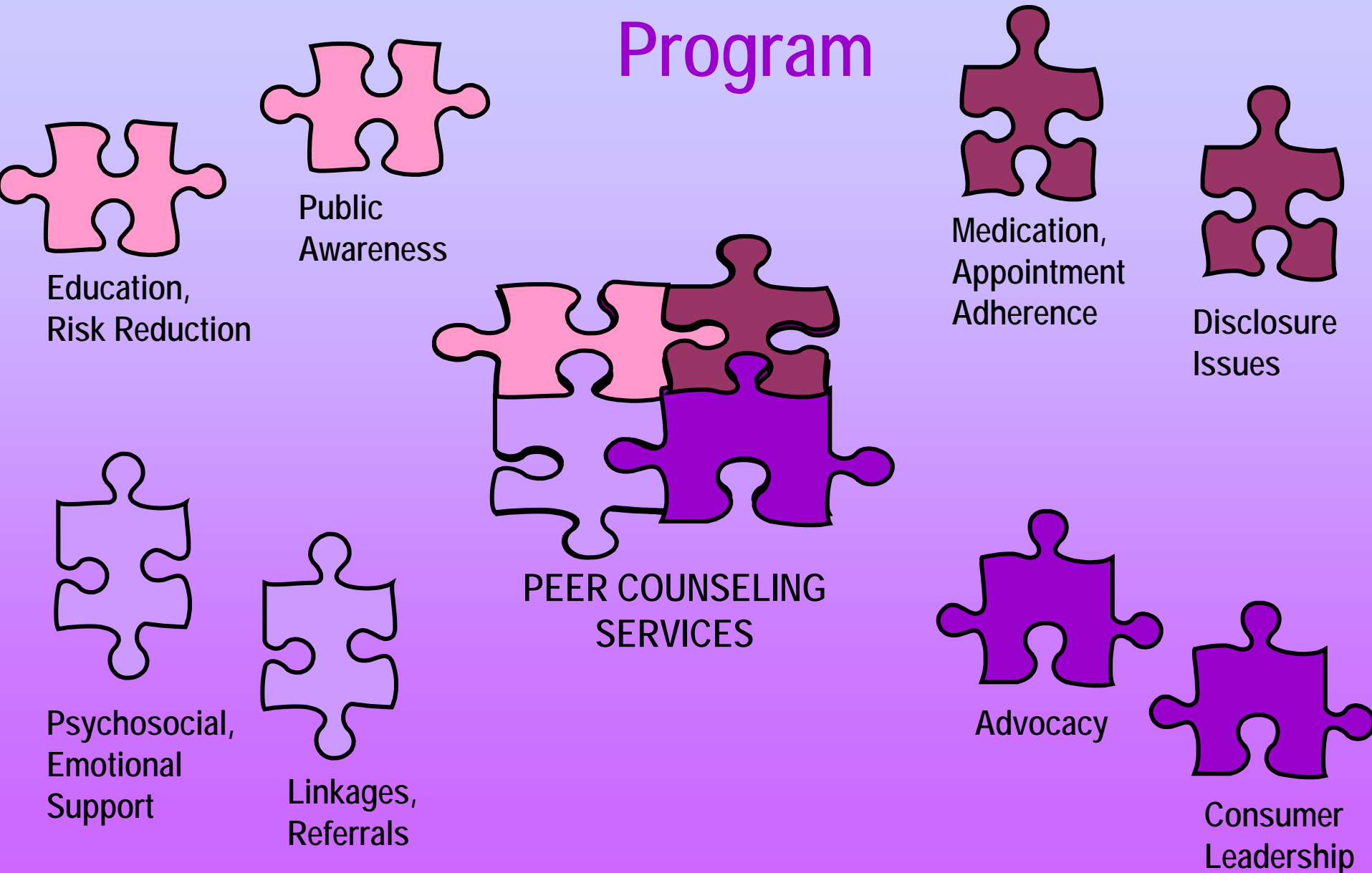
Need for Peers

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- ♥ 80% of women enrolled in our program during the last year were diagnosed with HIV during their pregnancy
- ♥ Complex clinical care needed (prenatal & HIV)
- ♥ Complex social issues
 - ♥ Accepting disease status
 - ♥ Disclosure
 - ♥ Challenging life issues: near homeless, domestic violence, substance use, etc.



Circle of Care's Peer Counselor Program



Who are Peers?

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- ♥ HIV+ women and given birth after 1994
- ♥ Comfortable disclosing their status to newly diagnosed women
- ♥ Comfortable sharing experiences
- ♥ Comfortable being a resource, advocate and educator
- ♥ Able to supply emotional support



Recruitment & Training

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- ♥ Care site of our provider network
- ♥ Formal consumer-training programs
- ♥ Referrals from current peers
- ♥ Baby showers
- ♥ Shadow current peers
- ♥ Attend training for case managers
- ♥ Regional HIV training
- ♥ Training in pregnancy care and family planning



How are they used?

♥ Prenatal Clinics

- ♥ Support HIV testers
- ♥ Educate & encourage testing
- ♥ Support and facilitate linking of positive women to HIV services

♥ HIV clinics

- ♥ Advocate with care team for client
- ♥ Support case manager
- ♥ Educate on Adherence
- ♥ Educate on disclosure
- ♥ Educate and refer for HIV services

♥ Baby Showers

- ♥ Invite all positive pregnant women
- ♥ Plan program and agenda
- ♥ Solicit support and educational presentations

♥ Education Presentation

- ♥ Encourage testing
- ♥ Share experiences



Integrating Peer Counselors in Family Planning and OB Services

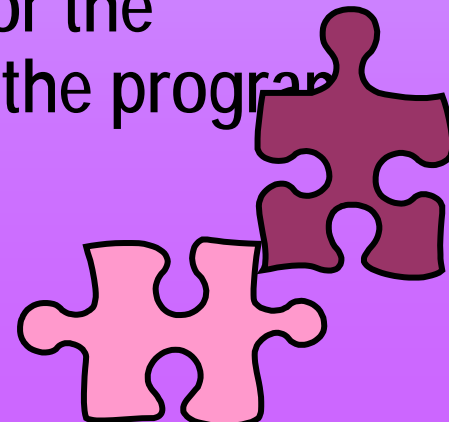
HIV Positive Women can serve as educators, counselors, and support persons in the family planning setting providing:

- ♥ Education to women
- ♥ Encouragement for HIV testing
- ♥ Member of the disclosure team
- ♥ Link to continuing care
- ♥ Emotional support



Results

- ♥ Supportive relationships maintained with HIV positive clients during, after pregnancy
- ♥ Strong relationships forged with clinical, social services providers; utilized as integral member of care team in high risk prenatal clinic
- ♥ Maintenance of clients within the COC provider network at one-stop shopping models for pediatric management
- ♥ Perinatal Database entry has allowed for the tracking of 4 repeat pregnancies within the program



Results Cont'd

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- ♥ 82 women enrolled in Perinatal program in 2004
- ♥ An average of 3 contacts by peer during pregnancy
- ♥ 5102 pieces of education material given out by peers
- ♥ 16 educational presentation for HIV+ pregnant consumers and their support systems
- ♥ Average of 15-20 women attend each baby shower
- ♥ Only two women lost to care in 2004



Challenges

- ♥ Health issues of the Peers
 - ♥ Maintain their own medical and social services linkages
 - ♥ Balance work schedule and adequate rest
- ♥ Recruitment/ training
 - ♥ Few organizations provide training for peers in this intensive capacity
 - ♥ In-depth knowledge about HIV and AIDS and an understanding of women's health issues
- ♥ Supervision
 - ♥ With a sensitivity of understanding the Peer being a member of the group to whom services are being provided; case discussions, problem-solving
 - ♥ Balancing perspective: translating an individual experience to broader view of issues





Lessons Learned

- ♥ Peer Counselors bridge gap between, consumers and social service providers, health care professionals
- ♥ Requires buy-in of hospitals, ASOs and case managers into value of peers
 - ♥ Include providers who have had success with peers in relationship building with new clinics and agencies
- ♥ Circle created in-service tailored for counseling and skill building in Perinatal Services
- ♥ Our Peer Counselors are dynamic, caring women who care about our program and the women they serve, and therefore offer us invaluable insights for continually improving our program